

“THE DAY” AND ITS DISCLOSURES

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“The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day.”
2 Timothy 1:18

GRATITUDE is never failing in Christians. When they have received a benefit, they are sure to acknowledge it. When Paul was at Rome, Onesiphorus found him out very diligently, and was not ashamed of his chains, but ministered to his necessities, and therefore, Paul felt bound to him and to his family in perpetual thankfulness. Let none of us ever be accused of ingratitude, it is one of the worst of sins. Paul, no doubt, would have done all he could for Onesiphorus in other ways, but he added to all other ways of showing his gratitude, that of praying for him—praying the prayer which we have here put on record in the Book of Inspiration.

Learn hence that if we can do nothing else for our benefactors, we can bless them by our prayers. Let us be abundant in pouring out supplications before for all those who in any way have done us a service. We learn also from the text that the best of men have need to be prayed for. I cannot doubt but that Onesiphorus was saved. He seems to have been a most decided follower of Christ, for when others did not know Paul because he was a prisoner, Onesiphorus knew him, he sought him out, he sought him out diligently, even into the poorest quarters of that great city of Rome, and hunted him out, though probably the population at that time was not less, but perhaps far more than four millions of people.

He found the apostle and he ministered unto his need. He was a good man, and yet Paul prayed for him—prayed for him a prayer which would be appropriate for a bad man too, “The Lord grant that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day!” The best of us needs to be prayed for. Let us be thankful if we have anybody to pray for us. Let us count the prayers of the faithful to be our true riches. He is the happiest man who shall have the most of God’s people lift up their hearts in prayer for him.

I call your attention, however, tonight to none of these surrounding particulars, I want to fix your minds upon one thing. I desire, anxiously desire, that we may all be led to look forward to that day of which the apostle here speaks. And our first point shall be *that day*. Then our second point shall be *the mercy of that day*.

First, then—

I. “THAT DAY.”

Paul speaks of the day of judgment here. He does not specify it, because it was so commonly believed in and expected among Christians, that it was quite sufficient for him to say “that day.” From the earliest times, wherever there has been divine light, that day has been expected. Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied concerning the coming of the Lord, and his prophecy, though very early, was so clear that the Jew, who almost closes the Book of Inspiration, quotes it—feeling, I suppose, that he could not use words more expressive than those which came from that ancient prophet.

All along the pages of Scriptural history you read of men raised up to tell of that day. Asaph, in the psalm we read just now, gave a most accurate description of that day when the Lord shall judge His people. And Daniel, when he saw the throne set and the Ancient of Days come, perceived that day for which we also are now looking. Nothing, perhaps, is more often spoken of in Scripture than that day. The New Testament teems with allusions to that day of judgment, when the Lord shall be revealed with

flaming fire. I say it was so commonly understood, that Paul had no need to say anything except “that day.”

Questions will be asked tonight by some, “When will that day come?” to which I would answer, it were better for us to be prepared for it, come when it may, than to be anxious to fix its date. We can give you no information, because “of that day and of that hour knoweth no man—no, not the angels of heaven.” After trying to discover what I can of the future, I arrive at this conclusion from Scripture, that the Lord would have us be in a state of perpetual vigilance and expectancy, and hence He has studded the Scriptures with phrases to the effect that He comes quickly. Truly His “quickly” will not be the same as ours, but I think the noontide of the world may have passed, and these are the latter days, and we might to be looking for and hastening unto the coming of the Son of Man.

He may come tomorrow, He may come tonight. He may delay His coming, but He shall come at such an hour as the mass of men think not, and at an hour when they are not aware. That day shall overtake them as a thief in the night and come upon them as pain upon a woman in travail. Some may curiously ask whether the day of judgment will be a natural day or not. Will it be a day of twenty-four hours? To which we again reply, we have no information, but we know that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. It will be a definite period. Whatever its length or brevity, it will suffice for an accurate judgment, and a judgment of all mankind. Whether it shall occupy a thousand years or a single day, the work will be done—done thoroughly, done effectually, done forever, for all the race of Adam. Let us rest assured of that.

It is far more important for us to know these things about that day, first, that it will be ushered in as no other day has been. The day began in Eden with the rising sun, and when the sun’s first beams had lit up the sky, the birds began to sing right joyously among the trees, but that day shall be ushered in, not by the rising sun, but by the Sun of Righteousness Himself. He shall arise with all the glory of His Father, and the holy angels shall come with Him.

There will be sights and sounds on that tremendous morning such as never were seen or heard by mortal men before. Even Sinai’s tremendous pomp, which made Moses fear and quake, shall be outdone in that dread day when the Lord shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the trump of the archangel, and with the voice of God. It will be a day of days. Its dreadful surroundings are spoken of in Scripture, but after all, words can but feebly describe them.

It will be a day especially notable *for the revelation of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ*. As yet He is hidden among the sons of men. He was as one concealed in incognito. He traveled through this world, and they counted Him a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. He has gone into His glory, but He is concealed at the right hand of God from the gaze of men below. They see Him not, they know Him not, but in that day He shall sit upon the clouds of heaven, and every eye shall see Him, and they also which crucified Him. Then shall they say that He is Divine, and no longer shall they dare to dispute it. Then shall the Jew see that He is the Messiah that was for to come and then shall the Gentile perceive that He is King of kings and Lord of lords.

The flashings of His glory shall convince all mankind, and the wicked shall stand speechless before His judgment bar. Pilate then shall not ask Him, “What is truth?” for he, alas! too late, shall perceive it. They shall bring no accusation against Him then, for to their confusion they shall see that He was no traitor, but a King. Judas shall not sell Him then, for he shall perceive then that he who sold Him was the son of perdition, to perish forever.

Oh! what a day shall that be when, coming out of His chamber rejoicing like a strong man to run a race, the Bridegroom of the church shall appear, and all His saints shall appear with Him. It will be *a day remarkable for its wonderful convictions*. There will be a general assembly held on that day such as never has been held before. For, first, *the Son of God shall be the center of all eyes*, and around Him shall be His Father’s angels. Heaven shall send her pomp to swell His train. He shall come, and His saints also shall come with Him. The glorified shall come to sit with Him, and then, as in a moment, the dead shall arise.

I shall go into no minute questions or particulars now, but certainly at that moment there shall stand upon the earth all the dead, both small and great, they that were on the earth buried in it, and they that were in the sea shall all arise, and as the trumpet rings out clear and loud the whole multitude of men that lived and died shall start up from their tombs to see their God upon His throne, and those that are alive at that time—all shall come and live again, and the raised bodies of men and the spirits of the just.

There shall come up from the infernal pit lost spirits too, and the chief foe of God and man, long scarred by JEHOVAH’S lightnings—he shall come and lift his brazen front once more, and the saints shall judge the fallen angel who long had persecuted them. He shall receive his final sentence, and begin the utmost hell which God had reserved for the devil and his angels, so that there on this poor planet, little compared with greater stars, and yet in God’s sight most glorious of them all, there shall be a convocation of the three worlds. Heaven, earth, and hell shall meet together, and Christ, in the midst of them all, shall judge the world in righteousness and the people with equity. Oh! what a day will that day be!

And it will be a day, in addition to the general convocation, *of universal excitement*. Next week the day of thanksgiving will move London from end to end, but there will be tens of thousands to whom it will be no day of thanksgiving, but perhaps of bitter sorrow. There will be nothing that could make them thankful in the pageantry of that day.

So of all the days that have ever happened to the sons of men, there have been some unmoved thereby. Let us speak as though our soul were in every word—some of our hearers will slumber, or their minds will wander. But on that day there will be no indifferent spectators of that tremendous pomp. The wicked shall wake up, their indifference shall have gone, and they shall be filled with dismay and despair. They shall long for annihilation, they shall ask the rocks to cover them, and the mountains to conceal them. The righteous shall not be listless either, for theirs shall be boldness in the day of judgment, and joy, and triumph, and acclamations of welcome with which they shall hail the King of kings sitting upon His throne. There will be a general excitement. Hell will howl its loudest howlings, and heaven will resound with its loftiest songs on that closing day of the drama of time, that day of which the apostle speaks.

And that will be *a day of wondrous revelations*. On that day we shall detect the hypocrite. See him yonder. The mask has fallen. See the leprosy on his brow. Then shall we see the men who were misrepresented, who were counted the offscouring of all things, though of them the world was not worthy. The filth with which men pelted them in the pillory of scorn shall fall off, and their garments shall be whiter than any fuller can make them in the glory of the righteousness which Christ shall put upon them.

There will be a resurrection of reputations in that day. And at the same time there will be the judgment of mere profession. Perhaps in that hour we shall understand the providence of God infinitely better than we do now. Then we shall see the evil of men’s hearts as we never saw it, for every idle word that man has spoken shall be published there, and transgressions of midnight that were covered up with curtains of lies shall suddenly stand revealed as in the noonday sun—and the men who scorned the righteous and were themselves guilty of abominable sin. Oh! what a revealing day! The housetops then shall ring with secrets that have been hidden in the closet, and men shall read the writing, as it were, upon the sky, the dark sayings and the hidden things which were of old.

And then when the revealing shall have come, it will be *a day of final judgment*. From almost any court on earth there is an appeal. Even after the judge puts on the black cap and condemns the criminal, he yet appeals to public opinion and to the mercy of the nation, and perhaps an unworthy life may yet be spared. But from that judgment seat there shall be no appeal. Forever and forever fixed is the fate of men whom Christ hath judged. “He that is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is unrighteous let him be unrighteous still.” No change can take place, and no appeal can ever be made. ’Tis done, ’tis sealed, ’tis inevitable. ’Tis over forever and forever—forever saved, or forever lost.

That day, then, ought to be a matter of personal interest to every one of my hearers, yea, and to every one beneath the sun. It will be the last day of time. Then there will be no more counting of rising and setting suns, no reckoning by waxing and waning moons. Then there will be no revolutions of the year to mark the period of time, nor will men count by centuries. It shall be eternity, one ocean of eternity without landmarks by which to say, “Thus far have we gone, and thus far have we yet to go.”

Oh! wondrous day! Oh! marvelous day! last day of time, a day forever to be remembered, remembered by the wicked in hell, to whom it shall be said, “Son, remember,” and remembered, methinks, by the righteous in heaven forever, for they shall look back to that day when Christ appeared and they were declared to be the blessed of the Father to inherit the kingdom prepared for them from before the foundation of the world. Oh! how I blame my tongue and chide myself that I cannot speak upon this theme as I would, but nevertheless may the solemn facts make up for my want of speech, and may they tell upon your souls.

Now I must turn to the second point and speak upon—

II. THE MERCY OF THAT DAY.

The mercy which is prayed for in this verse, “The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day.” Will that prayer be heard? Will that prayer be heard for me, for you, each one of you in this area, in these galleries? Will God have mercy on you in that day? I will tell you.

First, He will have no mercy in that day upon those who had no *mercy upon others*. If you cannot forgive, neither shall you be forgiven. If you cannot kneel down and sincerely pray, “Forgive us our debts as we forgive them that are indebted to us,” then the gates of heaven are fast barred against you. If you take your brother by the throat and say, “Pay me what thou owest,” the great Master of us all will commit you to the tormentors, because your great debt has not been paid. Relentless, malicious, revengeful men, take heed of that. Lay it on your pillow tonight, and let it pierce your heart—if ye forgive not every man his brother, your heavenly Father will not forgive you.

Next, God will have *no mercy in that day upon those who lived and died in wickedness*. Here is the proof of it, “The wicked shall be turned into hell,” and hell means not mercy, but misery. The men that have lied in the breaking of God’s law from day to day, from childhood to manhood, perhaps from manhood to old age, and have died still sinning—for them there shall be no mercy whatsoever.

There shall be *no mercy for those who neglect salvation*. Again I give you God’s words for it, “How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?” These people had not done any particular mischief to anybody else, they had not persecuted Christ, they had not reviled His Gospel, they had not been heretics, they simply neglected the matter. “How shall ye escape if ye neglect so great a salvation?” Ye shall not escape at all. If ye neglect His mercy here, mercy will neglect you forever.

Then, again, *they shall have no mercy who said they needed none*. Are there not some here who fancy that they want no mercy from God? They do their best, they are excellent in character, they are well deserving, and they expect to enter into felicity through their good deeds. You seek no mercy, you shall have none. You proudly reject it. You trust to your own righteousness, you seek to have what you merit, you shall have what you merit, but that will be to be driven forever from the presence of God.

There cannot be mercy to those who will not confess that they need mercy. There shall be no mercy in that day for those who sought no mercy here. Prayerless souls, you are graceless souls, and mercy shall be denied you then. You will pray loudly enough then. Oh! how they pray in hell! What tears and groans send they up to heaven! They would fain have mercy there, but Mercy’s day is over, Justice hath turned the key and hurled that key into the abyss where it can never be found.

They are prisoners forever beneath the wrath of God. They that will not ask it deserve not to have it. When mercy is to be had for the asking, if man turns upon his heel and does refuse to ask, what shall God do but say, “Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded—I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh”? There shall be no mercy for those who ask no mercy.

Further, there shall in that day be *no mercy for those that scoffed at Christ*, denied His dignity, railed at His people, broke His Sabbath, and altogether abhorred His Gospel. Oh! sirs, ye fight a desperate battle against Him who made the heavens and the earth, and who is the darling Son of God! In fighting against Christ, ye dash yourselves upon the bosses of JEHOVAH’S buckler, ye cast yourselves upon the point of His spear. Be wise and stay your rebellion. “Kiss the Son lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way when his wrath is kindled but a little.”

How shall the wax contend with the fire, or the tow wage war with the flames? Yet you are doing this, O you that rebel against Christ! You shall either break or bow. Bow, I pray you, for if not He shall break you with a rod of iron, He shall break you in pieces like a potter’s vessel. Beware, ye that despise Him, lest in the day of His coming He despise your image, and ye utterly perish.

There shall in that day be *no mercy for those who refuse the Gospel*. And I am sorry to say there are some here of that sort. Those cannot be said to refuse the Gospel who do not know it, but most of you do know it. I was thinking this afternoon, as I prayed God to let this subject get into my own soul, about some of you who do not want for light and instruction, who do not need to know more about the way of salvation, or about the penalty of neglecting it.

What you want is a new heart and a right spirit, you want the will subdued, you want decision of character, you want to be made thoughtful, you want to be made prayerful. I cannot do this for you, but I can warn you over and over and over again that they who go to hell from under the shadow of the pulpit wherein there is an earnest ministry, go there with an emphasis. They that fall from the heights of privilege fall, indeed, into the lake of fire.

God grant that not a solitary one of the many hearers who gather here may know what it is to have it said, “It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you. They would have repented had they heard the gospel, but you heard it and repented not.”

I must add to all this that there shall be *no mercy in that day for those who have sold their Lord*. “Where are they?” say you. “Does there live on this earth a miscreant who has sold his Lord?” God have mercy on the man—he not only lives on earth, but he is here. He was once a professor, but he found it more profitable to cease from religion, and he has done so. He once came to the communion table, but he fell into lustful habits, and he is no member of Christ. He has defiled the temple of God, and him shall God destroy. He could sometimes pray in public at the prayer meeting, but he dares not pray now, he has enough conscience left to let him cease from such hypocrisy. He sold his Lord for pleasure, he sold his Lord for pelf, he sold his Lord for the fear of man.

“Verily I say unto you, he who is ashamed of me and my Word, of him will I be ashamed when I shall come in the glory of my Father and all my holy angels with me.” You know who spoke those words. They were spoken by Him whose hands were pierced. He has said it, and oh! note, ye apostates, note it well, “He that denieth me before men, him will I deny before my Father which is in heaven. Verily I say unto you, I never knew you. Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity.” Oh! where is this unhappy man? May God have mercy on him tonight, for He will have no mercy upon him in that day if he dies as he now is.

And I shall close that list by saying in that day God will have *no mercy for false professors*. He will have no mercy upon preachers who could talk glibly, but whose lives were not consistent with their own teaching. What a condemnation shall await me, if I be not found in Christ after having preached so continuously to so many thousands! Oh! whatever a man shall be in hell, may God grant he may never be an unfaithful minister of Christ, condemned out of his own mouth.

But what shall I say of unfaithful deacons and elders, and church members? Their condemnation will be as just as it is terrific. Why needed they to add to their other sins the sin of a false profession? If they loved not Christ, they need not have been traitors. There was no necessity for them to come forward and be baptized into the Triune name. There was no demand upon them to come to the table in remembrance of Christ’s death if they were not His. They voluntarily thrust themselves into a profession which was a lie and into the midst of a church with which they were not akin.

Surely if He begins first at the house of God, His judgments will be most terrible upon false professors. For this chaff there shall be the fire unquenchable, for it was once upon the Lord’s threshing floor, for this dross there shall be consuming flames, for it was once in alliance with the precious gold which the King calls His own.

I feel inclined to stop preaching, and to pray for myself. The Lord have mercy upon me in that day! and then to take you all by name, if I could know you all one by one, and kneel here and say, “The Lord have mercy upon this man—this woman—this child—in that day.” But I beg you pray it for yourselves, now, in the silence of your souls, let this prayer go up vehemently to heaven, “O God, have mercy upon me. Have mercy upon me in that day, and to that end have mercy upon me now.”

I close, but I never like to close a sermon when it looks like Jeremiah’s roll—written within and without with lamentations. Let us have a sweet word or two to finish with. We spoke of that day, for a moment let me speak of *this* day—of *this* day. You have not come to *that* day yet. Today it is not judgment, but love that rules the hour.

Now the great white throne is not yet set, neither is there a trumpet that rings in your ear, but it is an affectionate voice, which speaks to you and says, “Mercy is to be had yet, mercy is to be had by false professors, mercy is to be had by apostates, mercy is to be had by the very chief of sinners.”

This is a night, this very night, in which prayer will be answered. God has said, “Seek and ye shall find.” This is a night in which Christ waits to be gracious. He is exalted on high on purpose to give repentance unto Israel, and remission of sins. This is a night in which sin may be forgiven. You are on praying ground, you are on pleading terms yet. The sentence is not passed. The wax is still melted, and it is not stamped and cold. There is hope for you—better than that, there are kind invitations for you, there are loving exhortations. How long these may stand good I cannot tell.

As far as any one of us may be concerned, the judgment day may come tomorrow. It may come to all mankind, but as far as the practical fact is concerned, it may come in death to any one of us tonight. I look round me now and I recollect a month ago certain seats in this place that were occupied by those that are now gone—gone to their account. If it were right, I think I could point my finger to some of you that are sitting in the places of dead men. They were their seats. They used to sit there, some of them, and they rejoiced in every word they heard. Is a sinner filling a saint’s place?

There are some, again, that are gone out of this company who gave us no evidence of grace. Alas! is there no sinner sitting in the place where one sat before him who forgot God? You are all passing away—I am passing with you. Shadows we are all. We fly like an arrow through the air. We are a wind that passeth, and it is not.

Oh! make sure of eternal things, brethren and sisters. Whatever you lose, lose not Christ, whatever you miss, miss not salvation. May God impress you with this thought. May He impress you, moreover, with *this* thought—that, “today is the accepted time; today is the day of salvation,” and may some of you be unable to sleep tonight until you have found the Savior.

*“For should swift death this night o’ertake you,
And your couch become your tomb,”*

then tomorrow, if unregenerate and unforgiven, you would be shut up where hope can never come to you. Oh! seek His face tonight! Dare not permit yourselves to feel the image of death upon you in sleep unless you have felt the scepter of Christ, touched by faith, communicate life and pardon to you. Seek ye Him. Oh! seek ye Him. Seek ye Him while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near. The Lord bless you, every one of you, and may we meet in heaven without exception, for Christ’s sake! Amen and Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

2 TIMOTHY 1:1-18

Verse 1. *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus,—*

Paul takes high ground. He is not an apostle by the will of the church, but an apostle by the will of God. God's will is the great motive power in the church of God. Some talk a great deal about man's will. What think you of God's will, the will of the Almighty? Surely that shall stand. Paul felt that he had that at the back of him. “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God.” Hence he always speaks very boldly. He never asks leave of anybody. If he is an apostle by the will of God, he exercises his office without fear.

2. *To Timothy, my dearly beloved son:*

Son in the faith. When all the ties of natural descent shall be forgotten, sonship in Christ will continue. I do not doubt that in heaven Timothy is still Paul's son, Paul is still father to Timothy, for the relation is of the Spirit.

2. *Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.*

I think I have called upon you to notice that when Paul writes to a church, it is “Grace and peace.” Whenever he writes to a minister, it is “Grace, mercy, and peace.” I have sometimes wondered whether we ministers need mercy more than other people, and I suppose that we do, or else the apostle would not have said, “Grace, mercy, and peace.” Oh! if a minister gets to heaven, it will be a wonder. His responsibilities are so great. “Who is sufficient for these things?” It will be a marvelous display of mercy if any of us shall be able to say at last, “I am clear of the blood of all men,” for we have not only our own blood, but the blood of others to look to in this matter.

3. *I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day;*

For this Paul thanks God. He never forgot to pray for Timothy, and it is a matter of thankfulness. When we feel moved to pray, though it be for another, the spirit of prayer is essentially the same, whatever its object, and we ought to be thankful when we feel continually able to pray for a friend. “I thank God,” says he, and he says that he had served God with a pure conscience all his days. So he had, but it was a blind conscience. At first, when he was a Pharisee, he still served God, though he then persecuted ignorantly the people of God. Oh! but it is a good thing sincerely to follow after God. May we be helped to do so. “I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day.”

4. *Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy;*

What were those tears? Tears of holy men and women are as precious as diamonds. Paul had noticed the tear twinkling in brother Timothy's eye—the tear of repentance, the tear of gratitude, the tear of fervent desire. He had noticed that, and being mindful of all this, he wished to see that dear face again. Christianity does not make us unsociable. It gives us new ties of love, fresh brothers, fresh sons.

5. *When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also.*

Happy son who has grandmother and mother before him in the faith. Unhappy young man who has quitted the faith of his fathers and has turned altogether aside. If such be here, we would remember them in our prayers, but we cannot say that we can remember them with joy.

6. *Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.*

Stir up your gifts like a fire. It will not burn without poking sometimes. Stir it up. And every now and then it is a good thing to have our heart stirred up, aroused, quickened, brought to a higher diligence. We must try to do this. Perhaps there are some dear friends here who have a large measure of latent gift, dormant faculty. Stir up the gift that is in thee.

7. *For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.*

Neither Paul, nor Timothy had a craven spirit. They were none of them afraid. God had taught them His truth, and they knew it, and they held it, defying all opposition.

8. *Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner:*

What! were people ashamed of Paul? Oh! yes, dear friends. The great apostle, because he was persecuted, found himself despised by some of the very people who owed their souls to him. It is the lot of those who are faithful to Christ to find even good men sometimes turning against them. But what of that? They are responsible to their Master, not to their fellow servants. Yet it is a hard thing when any come to be ashamed of you—ashamed of you, though you know that you have done right. I do not wonder that he puts it even to Timothy, “Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner.” Some of us know what it is to have trained and brought up those about us, who were to us what Timothy was to Paul, who have been ashamed of us, and of the testimony of our Lord.

8. *But be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God;*

You will want the power of God to do it, and mind you do it. Take your full share in whatever affliction the Gospel brings upon Christians. “According to the power of God.”

9. *Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,—*

How plain it is that he earnestly believed in the eternal election of believers—in their being in Christ, and in their possession of grace in Christ. “Grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.” God’s love to His people is not a thing of yesterday. He loved them before the world was made, and He will love them when the world has ceased to be. “It was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.”

10-12. *But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.*

Paul knew that grace could keep his soul, but I think that he here means that he could keep his own Gospel. Paul had kept it, kept the faith, but he committed it now into the hand of the greater One, who would keep it when every apostle was dead, and every faithful witness had passed away. “He is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.”

13. *Hold fast the form of sound words,—*

Many say they have no creeds, and there is hardly an Epistle in which there is not a distinct mention of a creed.

13. *Which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.*

Hold fast the truth. Hold fast the very form and shape of it. If you are to keep the life that is in an egg, you must not even break the shell. Take care of it all and take care of it all the more when with specious reasoning they say, “We will hold the same truth, only in a different form.” Why a different form at all, if they do not wish to hold a different doctrine altogether? Nay, my brethren, especially you that are like young Timothy, take this passage to heart. “Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.”

14. *That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.*

This is what we want. If the Holy Ghost be in us, we shall never trifle with the truth. He is the lover and revealer of truth, and we shall press the doctrines of the Word of God and the Word of God itself nearer and nearer to our hearts in proportion as the Holy Spirit dwells in us.

15. *This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me;*

What! turned away from Paul? Some people think it is an awful thing because certain people turn away from a minister of Christ. It is not an awful thing at all, except for them. Paul stands fast, even he, the bravest of the brave, and they all turn aside from him. What of that? Does Paul flinch? Nay, not he. “This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me.”

15. *Of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes.*

Two men who ought to have known better. Paul evidently fixed his eye upon them—more bitter than others, more perverse, more cruel, more willfully guilty in turning aside from him.

16-17. *The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chains: but, when he was in Rome, he sought me out very diligently, and found me.*

You could not tell in Rome where a prisoner was. The registers were not open to investigation. You had to go from prison to prison, and fee the guards to get admission, or to be told who might be there, and Onesiphorus was determined to find out Paul. I suppose that he went to the Mamertine, a dungeon in which some of us have been—one dungeon under the bottom of another.

The first one has no light, except through a round hole at the top, and the second has a round hole through which you drop into the lower one. We think that Paul was there. It is a tradition that he was. And then there is the Palatine prison, which was at the guard house of the Praetorian guards, near the palace on the Palatine Hill. There Paul certainly was, and Onesiphorus went from one jail to another.

“Have you seen a little Jew with weak eyes?” I daresay that was his description of him. “He is a friend of mine. I want to speak with him.” “What! that Paul?—the man that is chained to one or another of us every morning? We have twelve hours of it, and he preaches to us most of the time, and we know it by the time we are let go again.” “Oh! that is the man,” said Onesiphorus. “That is the man. Does he talk about Jesus Christ?” “Oh! nothing else but that. He will not let any soldier go from being bound to him without hearing about Jesus Christ.” “That is my man,” said Onesiphorus. He sought him out very diligently, and he found him.

18. *The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day: and in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus, thou knowest very well.*

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